

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A balloon dilation catheter comprising a tubular member having a proximal end and a distal end. An inflatable balloon is disposed at the distal end of the tubular member. A first lumen is disposed in the tubular member and in is communication with an interior of the inflatable balloon. A second lumen is disposed in the tubular member for receiving a guidewire substantially along a portion of its length. The second lumen has a first opening in the proximal region of the tubular member and a second opening at the distal region of the tubular member. A first slit is disposed longitudinally in the tubular member and extends along at least a portion of the tubular member, the first slit comprising a first pair of longitudinal edges in a side by side relationship. The tubular member is constructed of a resilient material such that, as the guidewire is separated from the second lumen, the longitudinal edges are biased open from a first position to a second position having a gap greater than or equal a diameter of the guidewire. The subject balloon dilation catheter provides improved rapid exchange advantages of either the catheter or the guidewire used in a catheterization technique.